

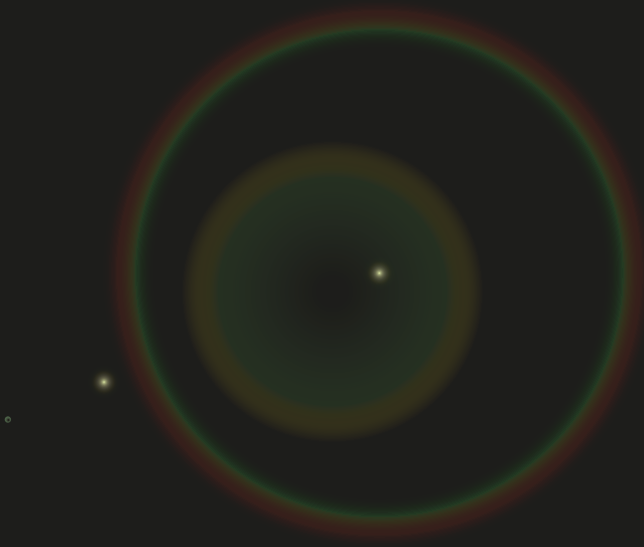
the costumes of game of thrones

# 05/ the women in KING'S LANDING





WESTWORLD



**SEASON 2**  
SPRING 2018 **HBO**



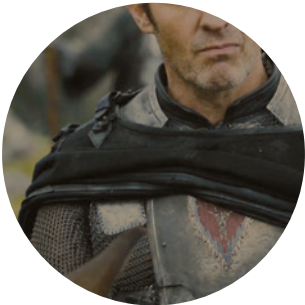
## 01/ the NORTH

Stark, Bolton & Mormont  
Report: Armours



## 02/ the WEST

Lannister, Greyjoy & Tyrell  
Report: Fabrics



## 03/ the EAST

Baratheon, Targaryen & Arryn  
Report: make-up & hairstyling



## 04/ the SOUTH

Martell, Tully & Frey  
Report: tailoring

**08/**  
**WESTEROS' trades**  
Maester, septa, King's watch  
Report: weapons



**07/**  
**the WALL**  
The Night's Watch & Wildlings  
Report: leather



**05/**  
**the women in**  
**KING'S LANDING**  
Cersei, Sansa & Margaery  
Report: embroidery



**06/**  
**ESSOS**  
Daenerys & her court  
Report: jewelry





**KING'S LANDING**



# MICHELE CLAPTON

interviewing  
the costume designer

Michele Clapton is an English costume designer, who has worked in both film and TV. She has found the most success designing for television period dramas, having worked on the costumes for *Sense & Sensibility*, *The Devil's Whore*, and *The Diary of Anne Frank*.

Clapton was nominated for the Primetime Emmy Award for Outstanding Costumes for a Series for all five seasons of *Game of Thrones* which she worked on, and she won twice, for Season 2 and Season 4. Specifically, the awards were for Season 2's "The Prince of Winterfell" and Season 4's "The Lion and the Rose".

After Season 5 ended, Clapton announced that she would not be returning for Season 6. She departed to work on an unrelated film project in Morocco, *Queen of the Desert*. Her position as the costume designer on the TV series was taken up by April Ferry.

On her departure, Clapton said: "I feel like we've covered all bases now. It was really important to me, knowing that I was going to leave, to actually design the costumes for each [geographic] area so it's complete. In my head anyway, it's a complete look that I left."

After the Season 6 finale aired, however, the producers confirmed that Clapton did in fact continue to collaborate with the TV show's costume department, focusing on a handful of the most important costumes which debuted in the final two episodes. Apparently, Clapton returned to the TV show after the film project she was working on was completed. Clapton specifically designed four new costumes for these two episodes, included the much-praised new costumes that Cersei wore in the finale: during the Destruction of the Great Sept of Baelor, and during



Michele Clapton photographed by Aaron Fever

her own coronation (Clapton also designed her new crown). This was the third Emmy award that Clapton received for her work on *Game of Thrones*.

For her return to the TV Show, Clapton ultimately won the Emmy award for her work in the Season 6 finale, "The Winds of Winter" (specifically in the category "Outstanding Costumes for a Period/Fantasy Series, Limited Series, or Movie").

The Emmy award winning designer behind *Game of Thrones* has developed an increasingly impressive repertoire in the past few years. As well as taking the reigns on the HBO blockbuster, the British costumer has worked on *The Crown*, *Queen of the Desert* starring Nicole Kidman and Robert Pattinson – and is currently working on set of the *Mama Mia* prequel.

The designer has faced one of her biggest challenges yet, highlighting through costume the descent of Westeros into Winter. We sat down with Clapton to talk about the new season, and the thought process behind some of her most famous creations.

“The costumes are about them being strong women and showing what they had been through to get where they were”

**Interviewer:** We already know how the Lannisters costumes features are, but we think Cersei’s have something special. What can you say about them?

**Michele Clapton:** When we first meet Cersei, she’s in a deeply unhappy marriage but is set in her ways and her style. Then Robert dies and Joffrey takes power, and slowly she gets harder. The bird embroidered on her clothes gives way to more and more lions. I wanted to increase her shell, I guess. Everything’s more ornate, grander, until we finally see her in Episode 2x09 (“Blackwater”) in a sort of armored corset. I don’t know how strong she really is, but she wants to project that image. I’ve always wanted to do this with her costume, from the start, back when we were doing the pilot.

**I:** And what about Margaery’s?

**Clapton:** Margaery Tyrell sweeps into King’s Landing and takes it by storm. As such, her wardrobe is very unique and very much at odds with everything else in King’s Landing [i.e. the Westerlands style, because Cersei used to be the trendsetter]. It’s a very structured look – the new style coming in after the war. For the first time in a long time, Cersei won’t be the trendsetter in the capital. It’s a fun way to reflect their future rivalry. It’s a journey on each of them — if you look back at where they first started it’s quite interesting to see. People always say, “Why don’t you have this, why can’t you add that?” and it’s like, “Well, sometimes you have to wait for that — you have to wait for the journey and for them to seek it out.”



Concept art of Margaery, Cersei and Sansa by Michele Clapton

**I:** Sansa certainly is one of the best character developments on the show and we can see that on her costumes. What can you tell us about her?

**Clapton:** Where a character comes from is indicated through the color and cut of the costume. When we first see Sansa, she wears things in a Stark way, but they are slightly clumsy and the cloth is rather homespun. As she comes to King's Landing, her progression is influenced by Cersei and her costumes shift. After Cersei does the awful thing of sanctioning the death of Ned Stark, Sansa is stuck, you can see her frozen in time. She's looking like someone who has just killed her father. And then we will see her progression as she slowly withdraws from the look.

**I:** Is there an overall theme that ties the women of Westeros together over the last seasons?

**Clapton:** There's just a showing of strength among the women, and in a funny way this is true with Sansa as well. She has the chain, she has the circle, she's bringing all that she's been through to her costume. You need to look at the story. Her strength and the way that she's clothed to protect herself from the things that have happened. At the same time, she's beginning



Michele Clapton photographed by Aaron Fever | HBO



Concept art by Michele Clapton | HBO

to assert herself as an independent woman and not actually being manipulated by anyone anymore. And so it's just a stepping forward of each of these women.

[The new costumes were] just about them being strong women and showing what they had been through to get where they were. I always try to tell that story — the costumes for me are narrative and you should be able to look at them and understand where they are mentally in their journey. I think they've all found a strength and achieved something.

In Cersei's case, she's finally achieved the throne. For Dany, she feels like she will achieve the throne. Sansa has finally become independent from a lot of the people that she's been reliant on, though maybe not Littlefinger. It was a way of darkening up these women and trying to show that were fighting each other not from a point of femininity but from the point of a person.



# **CERSE LANNISTER**

**the lioness queen**

*“When you play the game of  
thrones, you win or you die.  
There is no middle ground.”*

— Cersei Lannister

Queen Cersei I Lannister is the widow of King Robert Baratheon and Queen of the Seven Kingdoms. She is the daughter of Lord Tywin Lannister, twin sister of Jaime Lannister and elder sister of Tyrion Lannister. She has an incestuous relationship with Jaime, who is secretly the father of her three children, Joffrey, Myrcella and Tommen.

After the assassinations of Joffrey and Myrcella, and Tommen's suicide in the wake of the destruction of the Great Sept of Baelor, Cersei assumed the throne under the name of Cersei of the House Lannister, the First of Her Name, Queen of the Andals and the First Men, Protector of the Seven Kingdoms.

Cersei is ruthless, willful, cold, ambitious, and cunning in the sense that she is utterly willing to betray anyone who trusts her, or do anything to protect her own. However, she is also arrogant and self-centered to a fault. While she certainly believes herself to be a master strategist, she is extremely impatient, short-sighted, and prone to displays of poor judgment and poor leadership, resulting in her being both unskilled at manipulating enemies who openly distrust her and incapable of thinking about the long-term consequences of her actions. Cersei's own father Tywin

stated to her that he distrusts her because she isn't nearly as intelligent as she believes herself to be. This makes for a dangerous combination, as not only is Cersei not as intelligent as she thinks, but she does not even realize her own limitations.

She is not completely devoid of tact. Despite their blatant attempt to deceive her and collect the reward on her brother, Cersei opts not to punish a pair of bounty hunters to avoid discouraging the other hunters from finding Tyrion and acknowledges that mistakes will be made.

Cersei's schemes may work initially, but they have a tendency to backfire on her. She was partially successful in her scheme to have Ned Stark falsely confess to treason before exiling him to the Wall in order to keep the North and the Riverlands in line. However, she failed to predict that Joffrey would be so foolish as to start a war by having Ned executed instead. Her scheme to undermine the Tyrells' plot to marry Loras to Sansa backfires on her when Tywin insists that Cersei will marry Loras instead, and coerces the Tyrells into consenting by threatening to have Loras appointed to the Kingsguard if they don't. After Tywin's death, she thinks she can

co-opt the Sparrows into undermining the Tyrells, which briefly succeeds by having Loras and then Margaery imprisoned by the Faith Militant, but this plan ultimately backfired on her as well when she too was imprisoned and forced to perform a walk of atonement. In this particular case, the combination of Cersei's own ego, as well as her belief that the Sparrows were loyal to her alone, did not allow her to comprehend that the same tactics she used against the Tyrells could also be used against her. Finally, Cersei's plan to destroy the Faith Militant and the Tyrells backfires on her as well with the suicide of Tommen, her last living child.

A mistake outsiders often make when dealing with Cersei is assuming that she has the emotional maturity and wisdom of a queen, or at least an adult, when her real personality is closer to a petulant child inhabiting an adult's body (indeed, Lena Headey has stated that she plays Cersei as having the mind of a wayward 15 year old who never had any real parenting). With her mother dead at a young age and her father away at court (and a cold disciplinarian anyway), Cersei was functionally raised by servants. In public, Cersei often tries to exude a sense of calm and regal control over her surroundings.

When things do not go her own way, however, Cersei's usual response is to become childishly flippant, even when the assembled Small Council is trying to give her advice which would genuinely serve her own interests.

She also has a tendency to irrationally blame other people for problems she actually started herself though her ego won't let her admit otherwise. When Jaime reminds her that the world mustn't know Myrcella really is their daughter, she hypocritically faults him for his caution, saying it led to Joffrey being murdered and Myrcella being sent to Dorne in the first place, even though she was the one who had Joffrey installed on the throne in the first place rather than flee when Ned Stark warned her of his intentions in order to spare her children's lives. Although she later acknowledges that Tyrion did not in fact kill Joffrey, she blames him for the deaths of her other two children by sending Myrcella to Dorne and killing Tywin, an act that she says made the Lannisters vulnerable to their enemies. Again, Cersei forgets that Tyrion's actions were brought on entirely by her own, namely her failure to stop Joffrey from executing Ned and igniting a war, and later irrationally accusing Tyrion for Joffrey's murder.



Episode 1, Season 1. Royal visit to Winterfell.



Episode 7, Season 1.



Episode 6, Season 2. Myrcella's departure to Dorne.

Queen Cersei Lannister is paranoid and tries to armor herself against the threats she feels are around her, so her dresses are layered like armor, often including (symbolic) metal plating, in addition to expensive jewelry. To give this “layered” effect, Cersei’s dresses wrap around her, like a Japanese kimono. Cersei’s dresses also tend to have long billowing sleeves, which she can hold out in front of her like another layer separating her from other people.

On a more simple level, the expensive jewels, gold, and silks that Cersei wears contrast with Catelyn Stark’s style. Northern noblewomen aren’t as rich and can’t afford such finery, but Cersei is both a Lannister and the queen so she can, and because she is in the capital city she can easily acquire whatever exotic materials she needs from maritime trade. Also in direct comparison to Northern noblewomen, it is warmer in King’s Landing so Cersei doesn’t need to high padded collars the way that Catelyn does.

Other Westerlands noblewomen imitate Cersei’s styles, as do the noblewomen and handmaidens at the royal court in King’s Landing, where she has been queen for seventeen years at the beginning of the TV series.



Episode 9, Season 1. Ned Stark’s beheading.



Episode 2, Season 4. The Purple Wedding

At the beginning of the TV series, Cersei is making at least some attempt to appear friendly, wearing blue or gold colors and bird motifs in her clothing, but as her hostility increases she starts dressing in progressively more overt Lannister colors, gold and red. By the end of Season 1 (such as when she dismisses Ser Barristan Selmy) she is wearing pink and gold, and by the beginning of Season 2 she is wearing her true colors: bold Lannister red, with gold highlights.

During Season 2, Cersei fears she is losing control due to both external pressures (the Starks, Renly and Stannis) and internal pressures (Tyrion and the other Small Council members). Therefore as Season 2 progresses, Cersei gradually shifts to dresses which increasingly display her signature “layered”, wrap-around look, as if to mentally shield herself in armor from all of the threats she sees around her. By the end of Season 2 during the Battle of the Blackwater, she has even incorporated symbolic plate armor into her dresses.

By late Season 3/Season 4, Margaery’s new style has become so popular at the royal court that much to her chagrin, Cersei has to emulate some aspects of it to appear fashionable. Cersei’s dresses start to have a round cut top that exposes her collarbones, like Margaery’s earlier dresses, though Cersei still retains her own long sleeves.



Episode 5, Season 3. After Margaery's arrival



Details of Cersei's dress on episode 9, season 2.



Episode 3, Season 5



Episode 1, Season 5. Tywin's funeral

After Joffrey dies Cersei switches to wearing black mourning wear, with dagger-print embroidery. She continues to wear mourning clothes in Season 5 due to her father Tywin's death. In this season she gets arrested by the Faith Militant, until she confesses and comes back to the Red Keep, not before she endures her walk of atonement. Due to this we no longer see her long hair, because they cut it.

On season 6, we see a powerless Cersei trying to recover the power she held, until she is crowned as Queen of the Seven Kingdoms on episode 10. By this time, something has changed in her, she's looking for revenge against all those people she thinks hurt her family.

By Season 7, Cersei's look has radically changed since her son Tommen's suicide at the end of last season. Her black mourning clothes quickly evolved into a dark, structured look as she claimed the throne for herself at the end of season 6. That image continues in the current season. It's imposing and militaristic, suggesting Cersei is battle-ready.

It also makes a direct reference that viewers may not have noticed. Of one particular dress, made of leather layered over silver brocade, that mimics that of her fathers. Tywin, who was the patriarch of the Lannister family until his death in season 4, wore a jacket that was remarkably similar. The echo in Cersei—even more pronounced with her long hair recently cut short—shows her assuming Tywin's former role as powerful, merciless leader of the Lannisters.



Episode 10, Season 5, the Walk of Atonement



Episode 7, Season 6



Episode 1, Season 7

Cersei wears her hair differently in public and in private. Cersei is all about appearances, nothing more, so on formal public occasions she makes it a point to have her hair elaborately styled, but in private she wears her hair down, because she doesn't really care. Basically, Cersei will have her hair styled for a ceremony in the throneroom but has reached the point where she doesn't care how the Small Council or Sansa Stark see her hair. This signifies that Cersei's public face and private persona are polar opposites, i.e. she is two-faced, and her polite public appearances are just an act. In contrast, Margaery Tyrell always has her hair maintained and braided to a certain degree – not as formally as for full-scale court ceremonies, but she still cares about her appearance even if only in private. This reflects how unlike Cersei, Margaery and the Tyrells are much more honest and well-meaning (particularly towards Sansa Stark), and their private appearances are not drastically different from their public appearances.

Lena Headey wears a wig to portray Cersei, instead of her own (dyed) hair. The wigs in the TV series are made of real human hair, and can cost as much as \$7,000. Cersei's wig does not undergo any chemical processing at all (which is used on some of the other wigs to make them the exact color they need to be). Rather, the wig maker sourced individual colors and strands of hair, which were then individually knotted onto a lace cap one strand at a time to achieve the perfect golden blonde blend.



Episode 10, Season 6, Cersei is crowned as Queen of the Seven Kingdoms



# MARGAERY TYRELL

**the little flower**

Petyr Baelish: *“Do you  
want to be a Queen?”*

Margaery Tyrell: *“No.  
I want to be the Queen.”*

Queen Margaery Tyrell was the only daughter of Lord Mace Tyrell and Lady Alerie Tyrell, granddaughter of Lady Olenna Tyrell and sister of Ser Loras Tyrell. Margaery became Queen Consort through her marriage to King Joffrey Baratheon, and later his younger brother, King Tommen Baratheon, following Joffrey's death. Her desire to become Queen, however, ultimately proved to be her downfall as she was eventually killed along with her brother and father when the Great Sept of Baelor was destroyed with wildfire as orchestrated by Cersei Lannister to reclaim her lost power.

Margaery's beauty was equaled by her cleverness, which she had in abundance. A true protégée of her grandmother Olenna, she was a gifted manipulator who knew how to maneuver her way in court politics. Margaery's strength was in her ability to win the minds and loyalties of her subjects, which had proven to be a threat to those who rival her family, such as the Lannisters. She demonstrated her formidable skill in her charity work to win over

the commoners of King's Landing, as well as her manipulation of Joffrey by making him think she was excited by his dark impulses. In return Margaery gained the acceptance of both her subjects and Joffrey, who was an unpredictable and uncontrollable madman to everyone else, including his mother. This proved to be a threat to Cersei, who only relied on the fear of her family name and her position as a source of power.

Margaery possessed the tact and politeness that Cersei lacks. While Cersei is blunt and often rude, Margaery was capable of exuding the courtly behavior and courtesies expected of a queen - while still privately engaging in palace intrigues to increase her family's power. Cersei scorns her status as a woman in a realm dominated by men, though she is willing to use sex as a weapon to seduce those she needs (such as her cousin Lancel). In contrast, Margaery worked within the social standards of "proper" femininity in Westeros, but adeptly turned them to her favor, to orchestrate political machinations from behind the scenes.

Although Margaery had to develop many different facades depending on who she is trying to manipulate, she was shown to genuinely have a good heart, compassion, and empathy. Margaery had loving relationships with all of her family members. She loved her brother Loras and was entirely tolerant of his homosexuality - to the point that when her father contracted a marriage-alliance between herself and Loras's own lover Renly, she acknowledged that it was a paper marriage, and was quite frank that she had no issues with her new husband continuing his sexual relationship with her brother. In addition, she rather resourcefully suggested utilising Loras in order to help conceive a child with Renly. She also showed genuine concern and tried to form a friendship with Sansa, even offering her help to get out of King's Landing once married to Joffrey - though this may have been in part because she had the more long-term goal of good relations with the North, sensing that the unstable Lannisters wouldn't be in power forever. She shared a very strong bond with her grandmother, sharing her acuity for manipula-

tion and political maneuvering. Though she had developed many facades in order to sway the opinions of others in her favor, she was extremely loyal to her family and house, and would go to great lengths to keep them safe. Though she was willing and able to feign affection for Renly and Joffrey, she genuinely cared for Tommen (she may not have loved him, but it's quite clear that she at least liked him) and bore him no ill will when he failed to stop the arrest of both her and her brother, a feeling which he reciprocated to such an extent that he willingly committed suicide when she was murdered by Cersei.

It should be noted that Margaery herself was not technically outmanoeuvred by Cersei in the end: Margaery, even without having any idea of the wildfire plot, realised the threat of Cersei's absence, and thus ordered an evacuation, potentially with time to spare to get everyone out. It was, instead, the High Sparrow who was outmanoeuvred, refusing to listen to Margaery and not accepting that his plans were about to collapse.



Episode 7, Season 6



Episode 7, Season 6

Margaery Tyrell's costumes go through an in-universe growth process, and the final look that she develops by Season 3 is meant to be a direct contrast with Cersei's style - both to viewers, and as a self-conscious decision that Margaery makes in-universe to differentiate herself from old queen Cersei and assert herself as the rising new queen. Cersei wears many layers of wrapped material, almost like armor to shield herself from other people; Margaery instead wears very revealing clothing with many cutouts, self-consciously wielding her youthful sexuality as a weapon.

Clapton explained that in Season 2, Margaery is still Renly's young queen, so she's still figuring out what her official "signature look" will be. This leads her to experiment between different dress styles. The first dress she is introduced in, beside Renly in his camp, has few of her later signature features other than a plunging neckline. Afterwards she moves on to a the flower-shaped "funnel" dress, which many critics commented on as somewhat bizarre: this was entirely intentional on Clapton's part. The funnel dress was supposed to represent a blind alley that Margaery went down with her style, an early experiment which Margaery later realized wasn't working so she abandoned it. The third and final dress that Margaery wears in Season 2 is beginning to show signs of her later signature look: smooth lines, a plunging neckline, and now the tops of her shoulders are exposed.

By Season 3, Margaery has moved in to King's Landing as Joffrey's new betrothed, and she has also settled into what becomes her signature fashion style: entirely sleeve-less, back-less, and with a plunging neckline. Margaery's style is in many aspects the direct opposite of Cersei's style: Cersei's style has heavy layers of material to shield her like armor, Margaery's style is revealing; Cersei has large billowing sleeves, Margaery has no sleeves at all; Cersei's style is asymmetrical, Margaery's style is (mostly) symmetrical.

There are still variations within this theme: Margaery actually has three different primary dresses in Season 3. They are not a continued evolution of her style, as she actually alternates back and forth between them throughout the season (it's not as if she just wears the same outfit two days in a row). These include:

A - The dress which is not only backless, but which has side cutouts. It has shoulder cuffs, and a floral print pattern across the entire top (made by alternating green with darker green). The upper and lower halves of the dress only connect in the middle of the front. It also has a gold metal belt piece in the front that looks like vines branching away from a large golden Tyrell rose in the center. The dress isn't entirely backless, only over the small of the back. Margaery wears this in 3.1 (when Cersei insults her that it is so revealing she must be cold) and in 3.7 when she consoles Sansa in the gardens about being forced to marry Tyrion.

B - A dress with prominent gold tracery on the front, in the shape of a vest. It has shoulder cuffs but they do not have tracery on them. It has the same golden rose belt piece that Dress A does. It is also entirely backless (except for the collar piece holding up the front) with a plunging neckline. Margaery wears this in 3.2 (when she introduces Sansa to Olenna) and in 3.8 (at Sansa and Tyrion's wedding).



Episode 9, Season 3; dress B



Episode 8, Season 3; dress A



Episode 1, Season 4; dress C



Episode 2, Season 4; the Purple Wedding



Episode 3, Season 4; wearing mourning

C - A dress with free-floating shoulder pads. This dress isn't entirely backless, though the back only consists of an X-shaped cross of material - the two straps that make up the cross extend upwards onto the shoulder pads from the back - the top sided of the shoulder pads don't connect to the rest of the dress at all, and the forward sides of the shoulder pads are only connected to the rest of the dress by strings. The dress also has a light embroidery pattern, which doesn't extend to the shoulder pieces. It also has a plunging neckline. Unlike Dress A and Dress B it has no golden rose belt piece. Margaery wears this in 3.4 (when she visits the Great Sept of Baelor along with Joffrey, Cersei, and Olenna), 3.5 (when she and Sansa are watching Loras sparring), and 4.1 (when with Olenna looking over jewelry for her wedding). This doesn't include the traveling gown with a long train that Margaery briefly wears when she visits the orphanage in 3.1, and ruins by walking through a muddy street - in fact, it appears probable that this is actually the same "intermediate stage" dress that Margaery was wearing in the Season 2 finale, and she has simply removed the sleeves by this point (given that they weren't actually attached to the rest of the dress, leaving her shoulders exposed).

The last step in Margaery's stylistic evolution is in the middle of episode 3.4 "And Now His Watch is Ended", when she starts wearing her hair up, whereas she used to let it fall down her front side (thus contrasting even more with Cersei, who wears her hair down). Initially in 3.4, when Margaery is at the Great Sept she wears her dress with free-floating shoulder pieces, and with her hair down. In the scene with Sansa at the end of 3.4, however, she switches back to wearing her dress with gold embroidery, and for the first time is wearing her hair up. Perhaps this was no mere coincidence, as Margaery was meeting with Sansa to offer that she marry her



Episode 3, Season 5; as the new Queen

brother Loras to steal her away from Joffrey's control - making this Margaery's first major attempt at going behind Cersei's back. Therefore, this is the first time that Margaery starts wearing her hair in a significantly different way than Cersei's hairstyle.

One of the reasons for Margaery's upswept hairstyle is that it simply reveals more of her skin, fitting with her revealing clothing style. This contrasts with how Cersei wears her hair down (or in a fan-shaped braid), again linked with her clothing style: Cersei wears her hair down as another layer of symbolic armor to shield herself with.

By episode 4.2, "The Lion and the Rose", Margaery of course switches to her royal wedding dress. After Joffrey's death at the wedding, she switches to dark mourning clothes for the rest of Season 4.

In Season 5, after Margaery marries Tommen and officially becomes the new queen, she suddenly makes a drastic switch to dressing in Cersei's style - apparently to taunt Cersei that she is replacing her in every way at the royal court. Overall, Margaery wears heavier, less revealing clothing in Season 5: according to Clapton, Margaery wore revealing outfits to impress those around her when she was trying to become queen, but now that she is the queen, she feels she has earned her position and doesn't need to play that act anymore. Margaery's new outfits are still sleeveless, but they are no longer backless. They still have somewhat low necklines, but they are no longer drastically plunging and revealing (it's nothing that Cersei wouldn't wear). Sometimes she even wears a light shawl wrapped around her arms, covering up exposed skin instead of revealing more of it. Her color palette also changes, shifting from using the greens and teals of the Tyrells to the soft golds worn by Tommen and the other members of the royal court, which as Clapton explained is to emphasize her new status as the queen of House "Baratheon" of King's Landing.



Episode 6, Season 5; getting arrested by the Faith Militant



Episode 7, Season 6



Episode 10, Season 6; Loras' trial



# **SANSA STARK**

**the red wolf**

*“I’m a slow learner.  
It’s true. But I learn.”*

— Sansa Stark

Lady Sansa Stark is the eldest daughter of Lord Eddard Stark of Winterfell and his wife Lady Catelyn, sister of Robb, Arya, Bran and Rickon Stark, and “half-sister” of Jon Snow, with whom she had a distant relationship due to her mother’s influence (which, like her mother, Sansa later regretted). She initially starts off with a very naive view of the world, but as time goes on and she and her family suffer one cruelty and betrayal after another, she becomes a more hardened and learned individual.

Sansa was born and raised at Winterfell. She enjoys proper “lady-like” pursuits and is good at sewing, embroidering, poetry, singing, dancing, literature, etiquette, history and music, because she grew up as the eldest daughter of a Great House, trying to emulate her mother’s example of a “proper lady” from the southern courts. She has inherited her mother’s Tully coloring, like most of her siblings, and Lady Catelyn thinks Sansa will be even more beautiful than she was when she was younger. She is often seen in contrast with her sister, Arya Stark who has neither her looks nor her accomplishments in feminine activities and comportment. Sansa’s devotion to the traditional, refined “feminine virtues” caused friction between her and her blunt, tomboyish younger sister, with whom she had a sibling rivalry.

As a little girl, Sansa naively believed in the tales and epic romances in which every princess gets her honorable knight in shining armor to sweep her off her feet. Sansa was infatuated with the traditional romances about mythical figures like Jonquil, and historical figures like Duncan, the Prince of Dragonflies. Her greatest goal in life was to be married to a heroic and handsome prince, sitting around with other noblewomen eating lemon cakes while gossiping about the goings-on at court. She dreamed of being a regal Queen like Cersei, and that just like in the epic songs she would meet her knight in shining armor.

Sansa’s innocent, childhood infatuation with the ideals of princesses and knights made her tragically susceptible to the manipulations of the Lannisters. She held the blind belief that all queens and princes are kind and truthful, as if inherently a result of their titles, when Cersei just happened to be a woman who married a king to secure a marriage alliance, and Joffrey just happened to be her son. Without real cause, she blindly loved Joffrey with all her heart and trusted and admired Cersei, only for them to repay her love and trust by beheading her father before her very eyes. Afterwards, Sansa has a harrowing experience as a prisoner of the Lannisters, a plaything for the psychopathic Joffrey to have publicly beaten by his guards for petty

amusement. Her shock at the death of her father was only later deepened at the news of how her mother and brother Robb were horrifically killed at the Red Wedding and their corpses desecrated. She was visibly elated upon hearing that Arya, Bran, and Rickon were actually still alive, and though she took mostly after her mother and had a somewhat distant relationship with Jon, she loved him all the same. She was surprised to hear that Jon had become Lord Commander of the Night's Watch, and Jon was the first person she turns to for shelter after escaping Winterfell, aware that he would protect her from Ramsay.

Sansa subsequently escapes King's Landing to the Vale with Littlefinger, and her experiences have clearly changed her personality. She had to learn from painful experience how to lie to survive at Joffrey's court, saying one thing but meaning another and manipulating people to her own ends as best she could. No longer under constant control by Joffrey and Cersei's guards, she is in her own way beginning to mature into her own power and influence as a political force.

The numerous tragedies she has suffered, and the crimes against herself and her family, have also darkened her personality turning her more ruthless, though not quite cruel. This shows when she refuses

to take Theon's arm when he comes to escort her to the Godswood to marry Ramsay and coldly asks if he thinks she cares what Ramsay will do to him if she doesn't. She also later expresses approval of what Ramsay did to Theon, now Reek, and declares she would do the same. Once reclaiming Winterfell, Sansa feeds her abusive husband, Ramsay to his own hounds, even smiling as it happened.

However, despite all the suffering that she has been through, Sansa appears to have retained a certain degree of compassion that is also demonstrated in her multiple attempts at reaching out to Theon after he admits that he did not kill Bran and Rickon and they are alive. After Theon helps her escape from Winterfell, Sansa once again sees him as a surrogate brother and promises she will not let Jon execute him when Theon fears Jon will have him killed for his crimes. Sansa also becomes more compassionate and a loyal sister to Jon and apologizes for being "awful" when they were children. When she faces Myranda for the last time prior to her escape from Winterfell, Sansa was about to allow the psychopathic girl to shoot her so that she could die with as much of herself as was remaining. She has also become significantly more brave, courageous and is developing nerves of iron.

Sansa Stark has one of the most intricate costuming progressions of any character in the series. She shifts through the most different clothing styles from different regions. She also knows how to sew well herself, so she can easily make alterations to her own clothing based on her current whims, as she is influenced by new styles around her. Sansa shifts in stages from Northern style, to Cersei's style, to copying elements from Margaery's Reach-style, to finally making a drastic shift to her own unique but Vale-inspired look at the end of Season 4.

Sansa's initial Northern-style dress is well-made but plain homespun material. The North isn't very rich so noblewomen cannot afford to wear extensive jewelry. They still care about their appearance, however, so they compensate by decorating their dresses with intricate embroidery. As seen with Sansa, she has large flower-shaped embroidery surrounding her neckline. Because it is colder in the North, Northerners also tend not to expose a lot of skin, and they also wear high collars. The Northerners in general wear murky blue and grey colors, but the Starks wear warmer blues because they are a warm and friendly family unit. There are still variations within this, however: Sansa wears a slightly colder blue color, as Clapton explained, apparently to highlight how concerned she is about being a "proper lady", which means that she more often restrains herself from making outward displays of affection.



Episode 5, Season 1; the Hand's tournament



Episode 1, Season 1; Royal visit to Winterfell

After moving to King's Landing she gradually shifts to dress more and more like Cersei, because she is enamored of what she sees as the refinement of the southern courts and the royal capital. She even starts wearing her hair up in an elaborate fan-shaped braiding, the way that Cersei does (as well as all of the other women at the royal court, because Cersei sets the styles at court).

After her father is executed at the end of Season 1, Sansa spends some time simply in shock, just putting on the same clothes again day after day without thinking about her appearance. As a result in the first half of Season 2 she still dresses in the Cersei style for several episodes, even continuing to numbly wear the same Cersei hairstyle (apparently not thinking to instruct her handmaidens to change it to anything else). This continues up to the point that Joffrey has her dress roughly stripped off in front of the entire court. For the rest of Season 2, Sansa switches to more neutral mauve-tones, verging on the warm blues that her mother Catelyn wears, as well as simply wearing her hair down again - indicating that she is no longer actively trying to imitate Cersei's Westerland/King's Landing style. Her fantasies about imitating the graceful kind queen she thought Cersei was are gone, and now she recognizes that Cersei is a paranoid, petty child in an adult's body who enables her psychotic son on matter how ridiculous his behavior becomes. On the other hand, she is still a prisoner so she is trying not to wear anything too bold or eye-catching, because she doesn't want to draw attention to herself.



Episode 1, Season 2



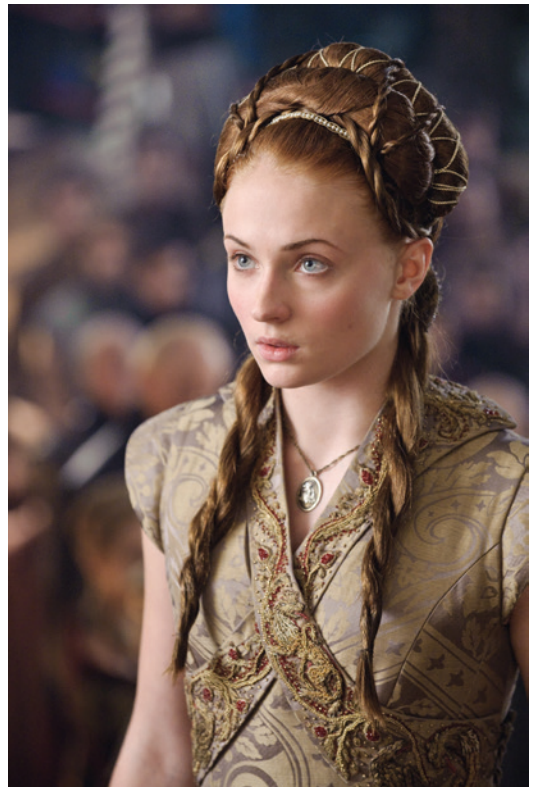
Episode 9, Season 2

After Margaery Tyrell shows up at court in Season 3, Sansa gradually starts emulating several elements from her Reach-style of fashion. She is still young and impressionable and emulates people she wants to befriend. Sansa doesn't add cutouts or plunging necklines to her dress the way that Margaery does, but in episode 3.5 "Kissed by Fire", Littlefinger notes in dialogue that Sansa has started to wear her hair up and back, copying Margaery's style. Sansa doesn't overtly copy too many elements from Margaery's Reach-style, though, because if she did it would draw Cersei's attention and invoke her anger. Thus she doesn't entirely copy Margaery's hairstyle, in which the hair falls only down the back, but has developed a hybrid look between this and her original Northern hairstyle in which her hair fell evenly about her shoulders. Now, Sansa's bangs and hair from the front of her head are pulled back and do fall neatly behind her back (like Margaery), but some of the hair from the side of her head still falls over the front of her shoulders, like her original Northern look. Sansa's dresses continue to no longer copy Cersei's color scheme, but are more of a subdued mauve color closer to what her mother Catelyn wears. More subtly, Sansa's plain style at this point still has the large sleeves that Cersei popularized at court, but it no longer has Cersei's asymmetrical cut - instead her dresses have a symmetrical cut, of the kind that both Catelyn and Margaery wear.

Sansa's wedding dress when she is forced to marry Tyrion in Season 3's "Second Sons" is something the Lannisters also forced her to wear. It is meant to give the appearance that she is trapped in it, with heavily embroidered bands running across it that give the impression of restraining her. The finely detailed embroidery also contains images of Stark direwolves and Tully trout - being surmounted by Lannister lions, visually symbolizing that the Lannisters want to dominate and defeat Sansa's family.



Episode 3, Season 3



Episode 8, Season 3; Sansa's first wedding

Sansa switches to inconspicuous traveling clothes after fleeing from King's Landing to the Eyrie in the Vale of Arryn. At the end of Season 4, she develops her own look at the Eyrie by modifying and combining elements from Vale-style, Northern-style, and her own unique additions. The production crew actually nicknamed this look "Dark Sansa" on-set —a striking black dress accentuated with raven feathers. The chain-necklace that the metal ring is threaded through also hangs below the ring, ending in an oversized metal sewing needle, again symbolic of her power within femininity. This oversized sewing needle piece hangs down to her waist if she lets it hang free, but she often carries it in one hand or plays with it in her fingers as she walks. Other parts of the dress seem adapted from Vale-style, with a few elements that she simply added herself.

A major idea that Clapton had is that Sansa is supposed to have been able to plausibly make her new "Dark Sansa" costume from materials on hand: Sansa is skilled at sewing but it would be difficult for her to make an entirely new dress from scratch on such short notice. Therefore it seems that she adapted parts from other Vale-style dresses she found in the Eyrie, combined with modified parts from the clothes she wore out of King's Landing. The Vale-style favors large open sleeves which are practically small capes, hanging from each of the shoulders individually but not connecting in the back (to visually evoke a falcon's wings). Sansa adapted to this look not by adding large sleeves, but by decorating the new dress with black feathers along the top half. In particular, at the shoulders these black feathers extend away from the body, evoking the image of a bird's wings, and making Sansa look more imposing.



Episode 10, Season 4; "Dark Sansa"



Episode 6, Season 5; Sansa's second wedding



Episode 1, Season 5; "Dark Sansa"

As Clapton explained, in keeping with the concept that Sansa had to have plausibly assembled this new dress from available materials, Sansa is supposed to have gathered messenger-raven feathers from the castle's rookery. Also, Sansa is making some effort to hide her true identity, so she dyed her auburn hair black. She now wears her hair back and falling entirely behind her, none in the front, making her look absolutely nothing like Cersei - this hairstyle is also much more like Margarya's, but it is much more subdued. The heavy riding cloaks that Sansa wears in Season 5 along with her "Dark Sansa" outfit, which appear to be the same style as the heavy riding cloak that Littlefinger wears, are of course meant to be a visual cue of her current team-up with him.

The second Sansa's wedding dress therefore has no direct counterpart in the novels. Clapton once again infused a wedding dress with deep symbolism: given that Sansa is back in Winterfell, it pays homage to her family in several ways. As Clapton said, "It's Sansa trying to respect everyone that's been before her. She finally feels like she can make Winterfell a family home again. So I wanted to incorporate pieces that represented her family."



Episode 9, Season 6; the Battle of the Bastards

The heavy feathering on the shoulders is meant to evoke the traditional Stark-style worn by her father and brothers, with heavy furs draped around the shoulders. The basic cut of the dress is based on her mother Catelyn's traditional dresses. Sansa even found in the castle some of the clasps that her mother used on her dresses, which are shaped like the Tully fish-sigil. The shape is also supposed to somewhat resemble the Stark crypt statues.

Now back in Winterfell, Sansa has finally embraced the classic Stark look, wolf-pelt cape included, and her armor-like dress arguably makes her look more like Ned than her mother. The suggestion is that Sansa and Jon have both come into their roles as Starks, and they appear to be sharing, or perhaps vying for, the position of lord of Winterfell.



Episode 9, Season 7

inside the  
**EMBROIDERY**



CRISTINA BAZAVAN | London, 24.01.2018

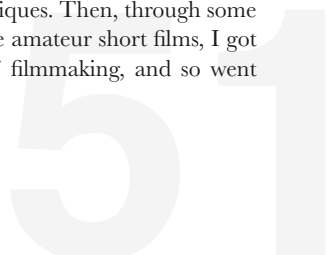
This Sunday HBO's fantasy hit show "Game of Thrones" returns for its fourth season, which has made a name for itself with its suspense and violence, but also for its incredible scenery and extraordinary costumes. What you may not know is the depth of imagery and the secret narratives contained in the costumes themselves — things that may not even appear on your TV screen.

For our occasional series on Hollywood Jobs, U.K.-based embroiderer Michele Carragher spoke with Take Two about her work on the "Game of Thrones" wardrobe and revealed some of the details. You can view them in the image slideshow above.

Michele Carragher is a London-based Hand Embroiderer and Illustrator who has been working in costume on Film and Television productions for over 19 years. She studied Fashion Design at The London College of Fashion, where the course incorporated design, pattern cutting, garment construction, embroidery, millinery and illustration. At the same time she attended a three year evening course in Saddlery at Cordwainers College learning skills in leatherwork. She is the Principal Costume Embroiderer working on the Costumes in Game of Thrones.

It's pretty clear the costumes of the TV wouldn't exist without Clapton, but also without the hands of Carragher. "I got involved with the show when I was asked by the costume designer, Michelle Clapton, who I've worked with before several times. Obviously, I was drawn to the show because of the creativeness of the project. Michelle, as a designer, she has great talent and spirit, and she's a real supporter of artists and craftspeople, and she really pursues the costumes being made with traditional processes when possible. Having fabrics woven and hand-printed, and she has a lot of hand finishing done on the seams and hems. Luckily for me she likes some hand embroidery."

It wasn't easy for her at the beginning, but the trust Clapton put on her was fresh air in her life. "I went to college and studied fashion design. While I was there, I became drawn to the theater design course and what the students were doing. When I left college, I went into textile conservation and developed my embroidery skills there, practicing on the many textiles that came through the door. So I got much quicker at different techniques. Then, through some friends who used to make amateur short films, I got involved in the world of filmmaking, and so went from there, really."



**Interviewer:** You seem to have drawn inspiration for your wonderful embroidery work from many sources –from architecture to painting and jewellery. What is the one most important thing that you learned from each of these three?

**Michele Carragher:** Because I often want to create sculptural and 3 dimensional elements to my embroidery I find it really useful to look at architectural decoration, or jewellery as a starting point as it will be easier for me to visualise the embroidery for the particular piece I am working on, for example a lion, from an already sculpted shape. I do however look to nature too, particularly if I want to capture movement within a piece. Within paintings I may be looking to the historical textiles and decoration within them, or it may be to look at how colours, mood and light have been captured by a particular artist.

**Interviewer:** How do you work with Michele Clapton? How much artistic freedom are you allowed in designing and creating the embroidery for the costumes?

**Carragher:** Working with Michele Clapton on Game of Thrones is a great pleasure for me, as well as working with the rest of the other members of the Costume Department. I admire Michele's spirit and her direction as a Costume Designer, it's a great collaborative relationship that we share. Regarding her input into my work she inspires me and gives me the freedom to experiment with my designs, and together we decide on the direction of a particular piece in order to try and make sure that I am creating embroidery that gives an insight within the detail that expresses the character's personality. Creating embroidery that isn't just a beautiful image embellishing her costume designs, we wish to use it as a narrative tool that will express much more to the viewer of the show about each character.



Image courtesy by Michele Carragher



Lysa Arryn Collar



Sansa's wedding dress



Daenerys's dragon scale pattern

**Interviewer:** Which is the character you love most in Game of Thrones – obviously, from an embroidery design perspective?

**Carragher:** I can't just pick one, Cersei is a great character where I have been able to push the boundaries with the 3 dimensional stumppwork and rich encrustation that I have created for her costumes. Daenerys, I really enjoyed the opportunity to be experimental when I devised her Dragonscale textured decoration for her costumes. Then there was Lysa Arryn and Catelyn Stark, for whom I created symbolic embroidered collars, referring to their heritage, I really enjoyed creating them and was pleased with the end result.

**Interviewer:** How was the procedure to create the dragon-scale pattern for Daenerys?

**Carragher:** I started to be involved in embellishing her costumes in season three. The decoration on her costume develops from a subtle texture, and as she increases in power and strength, this texture becomes more defined to map out her journey in the story. As Dany grows in strength with her dragons, the texture becomes more embellished and grows down the costume.

**Interviewer:** Despite the events on the show, Sansa's wedding gown is one of the most groundbreaking costumes. How was creating it?

**Carragher:** Wedding days should be a joyous event for the bride, but, unfortunately, Sansa's being forced into a marriage that she doesn't want, into the Lannister family. For this dress, Michelle wanted it to be a confined, restricted bodice shape with bare, vulnerable arms. She wanted an embroidered band that would wrap around the bodice and tell Sansa's life story.

Obviously we imagined that the wedding dress has been commissioned by Cersei and the Lannisters for Sansa, and so the embroidery would have come from Cersei's mind. We guessed that it wouldn't be romantic or lovely and girly and pretty with dainty flowers, but a real strong message of dominance, saying that we own you now, Sansa.

For the wedding band, I started at the back of the waist with some Stark direwolves and Tully fish entwined that represent Sansa's parentage. Then, as we move to the side, the Lannister lion is tangling with the direwolf and emerging on top, representing Sansa being seduced and then controlled by members of the house of Lannister. As it moves up the center, there's a central ascending lion that's got a Baratheon-like crown, a nod to Joffrey's parentage. At the back neck, the Lannister lion is stamped onto it, representing how the Lannisters now have total ownership over this girl who was once a Stark."

**Interviewer:** Many people won't notice these details on screen. Is that a bit of a bummer for you?

**Carragher:** Not really, because it's just fantastic to be able to have the opportunity to experiment and do that sort of work, so you enjoy it from that point of view. Really, you want the costume to work when it's not on the screen as well, to help the actor get into their character. I mainly see the costume on a dress stand,



Michele Clapton and Michele Carragher. Image courtesy of The Hollywood Reporter.

and I do worry about how it may look in the context of filming, so it's fantastic to see how the actors transform and breathe life into the costume and become the characters that they do. It's really satisfying for me to finally see the work on the screen, luckily I have a large screen television at home to watch it on.

**Interviewer:** Has anything changed for you since you started working for *Game of Thrones*? Are people more interested in you? Are people more interested in embroidery?

**Carragher:** From the point of me doing my job, no nothing has changed, but I do realise that I have been very lucky to work on and be part of a production such as *Game of Thrones*, particularly with Michele Clapton as the designer. Because of the show's success, we have been able to experiment and evolve within our work from season to season.

As the show has had worldwide exposure, my work as an embroiderer on the show has been highlighted and had more interest than would otherwise be the case on a smaller project. I think it has been great for shining a spotlight on the work done within each department and the attention to detail that all involved strive towards on a Film or TV production.

And yes I do think it has sparked more interest in embroidery and in pursuing these details on costumes, not just on *Game of Thrones*, as the audience become more aware of them, they start to look at the work on other productions too. I think it also inspires students towards their future career choices, just being able to see different avenues that it is possible to work within the World of Costume. Personally I have had many Embroiderer's Guilds contact me to come and visit their groups and chat about my work.

Diseño y maquetación: Laura Álvarez Miravete  
Diseño Editorial Grupo A  
Curso 2017/2018



the costumes of game of thrones

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the women in

KING'S  
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